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A TRIPTYCH BY ADRIAEN
ISENBRANT

THIS work was in the collection of Dr. Friedrich Lippman, for many years the director of the Cabinet of Prints in Berlin. The collection was sold last November and this precious little picture was secured by M. Jacques Seligmann, from whom the Museum has acquired it.

The central panel shows Mary and Joseph kneeling on both sides of a basket where the Child is lying. Back of the crèche are the ox and the ass beneath the arches of a stone porch. Two adoring shepherds are at the left. The Adoration of the Kings is on the left wing. Under a porch similar to that shown in the cen-

tral panel, Mary is seated holding the Christ child in her lap, the three Kings before her bringing their gifts. On the right wing is the Flight into Egypt. The three panels are bound together decoratively by the continuous lines of the landscape, which forms one background for the different scenes. There are wooded hills and steep rocks with castles at their summits at the left and right and a broad valley in the center, where shepherds guard their flocks and a woman goes to a well near a farm-house. There are other buildings in minute detail and here as elsewhere the artist has lavished the most exquisite care. The colors in various shades of brown, deep blue, and red have a quality like that of jewels.

The outsides of the wings are painted

in grisaille; the Annunciation at the left, the Visitation at the right. The backgrounds here are identical — late Gothic doorways.

As is often the case with triptychs, the wings, owing to the fact that they are protected on both sides by the paint, are in perfect preservation. The central panel has suffered but slightly. The Museum is fortunate in securing a work of such quality.

But few facts are known of the life of the painter. He was a pupil of Gerard David in Bruges, and was working there in 1520. His work, however, has been fairly well differentiated from that of his fellows.

B. B.

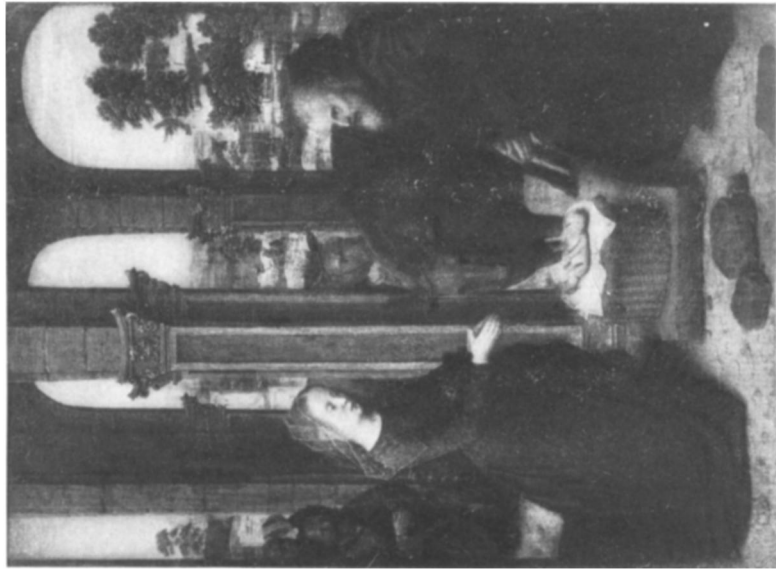
TOMB JADES



THE BULLETIN for January, 1912, contained an account of a valuable and unique collection of early jade amulets and small ornaments of the kind generally known as "Tomb-jades" which had just been presented to the Museum by Mr. Samuel T. Peters. To the two hundred and eighty objects of which his first gift consisted, Mr. Peters has now added two hundred and forty similar specimens of jade embracing chiefly types which were unrepresented in the original collection. Such jades, as was stated in the previous article, have all been recovered from ancient tombs dating from prehistoric times through the T'ang dynasty, that is, from about 1500 B. C. to 1000 A. D., and consequently are all of the stained and variegated color which the cream white jade used in these early periods assumes after centuries of burial in the earth. They were used chiefly as amulets to protect the bodies of the dead from earthly corruption and the entry of demons, jade being venerated as the embodiment of the principle of purity, and a

safeguard against all evil which might befall either the living or the dead. The collection includes amulets for the eyes, lips, tongue, and other parts of the body, as well as the symbols of the deities of East, South, West, and North in various forms, all of which were either placed around the body or fastened to it with silken cords, which were passed through small holes pierced in the jade. There are also a number of large annular disks sacred to the deity Heaven and sent by princes to their peers as particularly venerated offerings to the noble dead. Besides these the collection includes many delicately carved and pierced portions of the rich girdle pendants which were interred with the body so that the steps of the dead might be accompanied in the future world, as they had been in life, by the magic notes of the tinkling jade. The two largest pieces in Mr. Peters' gift were not primarily intended for sepulchral use, but served their purpose in daily life before being buried in the tomb; they include a rare Tui or two-handled cup dating from the Chou dynasty and used at that time for holding the blood of animals sacrificed in ceremonies of solemn covenant, and a remarkable and vigorously carved figurine of the evil-dispelling monster, P'i-sieh, made in the Han dynasty and doubtless buried with a prince. A flower vase of similar jade was perhaps not carved from the rough until a later period, probably in the Ming dynasty, a fact which calls attention to the statement of Dr. Berthold Laufer in his recently published book on jade¹ to the effect that the term *han-yü* which Bushell used in the sense of *han*, "held in the mouth," and *yü*, "jade" in reference to the custom of placing a bit of jade in the mouth of the dead, is taken by the Chinese merely to mean "Han jade", that is, jade of the variety used in the Han period which may or may not have been carved at that time. For as in the case of our vase, specimens of early stained jade found in the rough were sometimes carved into imitations of the more

¹Jade, a Study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion, by Berthold Laufer. Published by the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 1912.



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